

DETENTION OF ALAN P. GROSS

**HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 1, 2011*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for the immediate release of Alan P. Gross on humanitarian grounds. Mr. Gross, a 62-year-old international development specialist, has been held in a Cuban detention facility for the last two years. Mr. Gross has worked in community and international development for over 25 years and his work has positively impacted the lives of people in over 50 countries, including the West Bank, Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana.

At the time of his arrest, Mr. Gross was working on behalf of the US Agency for International Development with the peaceful, non-dissident Jewish community to help them establish an Intranet and improve access to the Internet. Logically, Mr. Gross brought basic technological equipment with him to assist in achieving that goal. Although he followed all appropriate procedures and declared the equipment in customs, Cuban authorities would use unsupported claims of illegality of this equipment as grounds for his imprisonment.

Shortly after his arrest on December 3, 2009, Cuban military officials placed Mr. Gross in a maximum-security military hospital, and held him for 14 months without charge. In February of this year, he was finally charged with "acts to undermine the integrity and independence" of Cuba. After a mere two day trial, he was convicted, and sentenced to 15 years in prison. His appeal to the Cuban Supreme Court was denied on August 5.

Mr. Speaker, Alan Gross is an elderly development worker, not a spy. He doesn't speak Spanish, making him an unlikely subject in the subversion of the Cuban government. It is insulting to suggest that Mr. Gross deserves a 15 year sentence for possessing "illegal" equipment that Cuban authorities could have seized upon his entrance into the country. But these elements of this gross miscarriage of justice pale in comparison to the humanitarian affront of keeping him in Cuban custody.

Mr. Gross' health has deteriorated tremendously during his incarceration. He has lost approximately 100 pounds and suffers from a number of serious health issues, some of which may become permanent. In addition, his family's health and financial problems have placed him under extreme mental strain.

In August of 2010, Mr. Gross' 26-year-old daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent, and is currently recovering from a double mastectomy. His wife, Judy, recently underwent surgery as well, missing a long period of work due to her illness. His 89-year-old mother was diagnosed with inoperable cancer in February of this year. This, combined with Mr. Gross' continued incarceration, has resulted in tremendous financial hardship for his entire family, and his inability to support them has greatly pained Mr. Gross.

In light of these events and his unjust sentence, I call on the Cuban Government to immediately release Mr. Gross so he may receive medical treatment and help his family through this tumultuous time.

CONGRATULATING THE JOHN GLENN HIGH SCHOOL SPELL BOWL TEAM

**HON. JOE DONNELLY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 1, 2011*

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the John Glenn High School Spell Bowl team of Walkerton, Indiana for winning the Class II Indiana Academic Spell Bowl held on November 12, 2011 at Purdue University. Their score of 84 out of a possible 90 far surpassed runner up Plymouth High Schools' score of 75.

The spellers practiced three times a week in preparation for their fifth consecutive state championship. The team consisted of Elly Alexander, Ariel Clark, Jake Coday, Ann Heckman-Davis, Cole Jacobson, Miranda Kafantaris, Kim Lord, Chris Mahank, Gabby Marek, Erin Patterson, Maddy Piedra, Paige Reed, Holly Rowe, Rebecca Shoue, J.J. Silvey, Justina Weiss, and Karna Weiss.

The team is coached by Paul Hernandez who has led the school to 16 state titles in 25 years. This outstanding achievement was recognized by the Indiana Association of School Principals who named Mr. Hernandez the 2011 Academic Coach of the Year. The only coach to win state Spell Bowl Championships in two different divisions, he is the English Department Chairman, tutors the Academic Decathlon Team and supervises the nationally recognized high school literary magazine, "Aerial."

Again, I rise to offer my congratulations to the members of the John Glenn High School Spell Bowl team and their dedicated coach for their extraordinary accomplishments throughout the competition.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. WILLIAM L. OWENS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 1, 2011*

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, on November 4th, 2011, I missed a series of votes to attend the Change of Command ceremony at Fort Drum, New York. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Rollcall 829, Ordering the Previous Question providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2838) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 830, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2838) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 831, To facilitate the hosting in the United States of the 34th Americas Cup by authorizing certain eligible vessels to participate in activities related to the competition, and for other purposes, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 832, Cummings of Maryland Amendment No. 3, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 833, Thompson of Mississippi Amendment No. 4, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 834, Napolitano of California Amendment No. 6, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 835, Bishop of New York Amendment No. 7, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 836, Slaughter of New York Amendment No. 8, I would have voted Yea.

IN RECOGNITION OF TIME WARNER CABLE

**HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 1, 2011*

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Time Warner Cable for its investment in local television news coverage, specifically for opening a Washington, D.C., news bureau that will cover stories and events here in Washington that are important to the communities its 14 local news channels serve throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, TWC is dedicating significant resources to high quality local news channels that provide critical local news, weather, traffic and sports coverage in the communities that they serve. We live in an age when local television news is disappearing and hometown newspapers are fast becoming a thing of the past. However, in the Charlotte area stations remain committed to reporting in-depth local stories. It is important to make note of the rare times when we see investment in local news coverage. I applaud Time Warner Cable for recognizing the importance of local news, for investing in it and creating jobs while providing this critical service to their customers and my constituents. Certainly it is with more local news coverage that we will have a better informed citizenry, which can only advance our great country.

HONORING THE UNIFICATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS UNION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS

**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 1, 2011*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the January 1, 2012 unification of the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW).

These two distinguished unions, with railroad roots, are on course to become one strong voice for hundreds of thousands of middle-class working men and women across America.

In 1888, 19 machinists meeting in a locomotive pit in Atlanta, Georgia formed what is now IAMAW, commonly known as the "Fighting Machinists." Throughout their 123 year history, the Fighting Machinists have grown to represent workers in several industries, including: aerospace, transportation, government, automotive, defense, and woodworking.

Today's TCU is also one union made of many. At its core is the union founded in 1899, which became the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. In 1919, the union became the